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THE MEANING OF THE DAKOTA OUTBREAK.

By Herbert Welsh.



It is the aim of this paper to explain the recent Indian troubles in Dakota; to say a word which, if possible, may harmonize the conflicting press despatches and contradictory stories that have perplexed the minds of intelligent and fairly well-informed readers, who are anxious to arrive at a trustworthy and reasonable conclusion, not only concerning the recent outbreak, but upon the whole Indian question.

As a writer's treatment of an important public event, and his claim to a hearing, depend not alone upon knowledge of its attending circumstances, but also upon his acquaintance with conditions lying far back of its occurrence, I may be permitted to take my readers over the road leading to my own point of view on this topic. I had no personal knowledge of Indians or Indian affairs (although a near relative—the late William Welsh, of Philadelphia—had given constant attention to them during more than twenty years of his life) until the summer of 1882, when a journey made, in company with Bishop Hare, over parts of the Great Sioux Reservation, first brought me into contact with many of the various subdivisions of the Sioux people, or, as they call themselves, "the Dacotahs." My interest became excited by the peculiar, and to me virtually unknown, facts and conditions of Indian life which were thus opened to my observation. In company with various gentlemen I was led to organize, first in my own and then in other cities, an association for the extended and careful study of the condition of the Indians in all parts of the country, for acquiring an understanding of their precise needs, and for promoting their advancement in civilization. Those engaged in this movement were wholly free from such bias as usually exists where personal or

financial interests are involved. Their service has been wholly gratuitous. During the past nine years, while conducting the work of the Indian Rights Association, I have three times visited the Sioux of Dakota, travelling on horseback or by wagon through all parts of the reservation, camping out at night, or receiving the hospitality of army officers, civil agents, missionaries—both white and native—and of Indians. I have also paid three visits to the Navajos and Pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona, and one to the Apaches of the latter territory. During all this period I have been brought into constant contact with men and women whose experience made them valuable contributors to an understanding of the Indian question—officers of the army, officials of the Interior Department, members of Congress, missionaries on the reservations, Indian agents, and teachers in Indian schools.

With this brief necessary preface I will outline, so far as space permits, the gradual development of our Indian policy.

General Grant's Peace Policy gave birth to the first national effort for a solution of the Indian problem. That broad-minded and far-seeing man became convinced, through his wide military experience, that, notwithstanding the fierce nature of many of the Indian tribes, and the incessant conflicts which marked the progress of American civilization westward, there were unrecognized hopeful elements in the Indian; that back of Indian uprisings, with their accompanying atrocities, usually lay some unseen spoliation or injustice on the part of the white man. General Grant believed the time had come for the enlistment of subtler forces than that of military chastisement in the management of Indians. In his first inaugural address he said: "The proper treatment of the original occupant of this land, the Indian, is one deserving of

careful study. I will favor any course toward them which tends to their civilization, Christianization, and ultimate citizenship." As the result of this allusion, a delegation of citizens from Philadelphia promptly called on President Grant, March 24, 1868, to thank him for his utterance. This led ultimately to the passage of a bill in Congress authorizing the President to appoint a Board of Indian Commissioners, who should serve without pay, and act as an advisory body with the Executive, to promote the civilization of the Indians, and to come to the assistance of the Government with the forces of religion and education. The gentlemen invited to become members of this Board, most of whom served upon it, were the Honorable John V. Farwell, Chicago; James E. Yeatman, St. Louis; William E. Dodge, New York; E. S. Tobey, Boston; Honorable Felix R. Brunot, Pittsburg; George H. Stuart and William Welsh, Philadelphia. General Grant's policy was no doubt due in part to the good work accomplished by the Indian Peace Commission, in negotiating treaties with various tribes of Indians during the years 1867-68. The Peace Commission was composed partly of army officers and partly of civilians.

At this time the general sentiment of the country was hostile to the Indian, and generally sceptical as to the possibility of success resulting from efforts for his civilization. It was quite natural that such should be the case. The horrible cruelties perpetrated by the Sioux Indians in the Minnesota massacre of 1863 were fresh in the public mind. Indeed this was but the most prominent and recent of the many similar tragedies throughout the course of our history which had created a wholly adverse impression in the minds of even the most intelligent and well-informed among our people, and had helped to establish the conclusion that the Indian race was irreclaimable—altogether savage, treacherous, and cruel. There were too few examples to the contrary, and too little known of the real grievances of the Indians, to lead to a broader and more correct impression.

Few persons knew of the services of friendly Indians, during the outbreak,

in giving settlers timely warning of danger, in rescuing others from captivity, and in performing valuable scouting service for the United States troops.

The inauguration of General Grant's peace policy led ultimately to large results in bringing more and more the intelligence of our people and their really keen sense of justice to a knowledge of the Indian, and an understanding of his peculiar position.

The Board of Indian Commissioners proved an important link between the educated Christian people of the country and the Executive. The knowledge which they acquired in their visits to various Indian tribes did much to promote a better state of affairs than had previously existed. The board proved of great value, but its usefulness was hindered to a serious extent by existing political conditions. Corruption and dishonesty, in that corrupt and dishonest period, flourished more luxuriantly in the Indian service than in any other department of the Government. Its riotous audacity astounded and disheartened honest men who were brought in contact with it. The Indian Bureau was the central point of operations for dishonest contractors and officials, who extended the meshes of their nets to the most remote Indian agencies, and who robbed alike the Government and the Indian. The boldness of these plunderers in carrying on their projects and in avoiding detection was remarkable. An incident will serve to illustrate:

An Indian agent located at one of the agencies among the Sioux was suspected of defrauding the Government and the Indian to the extent of about eighty thousand dollars. An investigating committee was sent from Washington to inspect his affairs. The agent got wind of their coming and determined to outwit them. He bribed one of his interpreters to meet the committee at a point on the Missouri where they would be obliged to take stage for the agency. The committee, in the long drive to the agency, fell into conversation with their unsuspected fellow-traveller, found him well acquainted with the Indians, and were especially overjoyed to discover that he spoke *Dacotah*. "The very thing," they said. "We will secure his

services as an interpreter." The fellow consented and received fifty dollars in payment for his services. Thus an interpreter was secured who translated the bitter complaints of the Indians in a way to make them appear as warm commendations of their agent. The committee returned, baffled, to Washington.

The great work which the Board of Indian Commissioners accomplished was the detection of existing corruption in Indian management, by which, ultimately, a radical improvement in the quality of supplies sent to the Indian was secured, and, to a large extent, the banishment of dishonesty from this department of the Indian service was effected. But most important of all was the work of the Commission in sowing the seeds of an intelligent national interest in the Indian question, and a national determination that the problem should ultimately be solved by means worthy a great people.

The Board of Indian Commissioners failed to accomplish the full measure of the purpose which General Grant had in view, and which was within their own hopes, owing to the firm grip with which political corruption held the Indian service, and because of the President's own fatal unwillingness to "desert his friends under fire." At great personal risk to its members the Board sought to drive out the plunderers who were feeding upon both the Government and the Indian, but owing to the protection accorded them by high officials the Commissioners were largely thwarted in their purpose.

Some of the more aggressive members of the Board resigned, in the belief that they could accomplish more good by independent and unofficial action than by holding further relations with the Government, since many of their protests against wrongdoing were unheeded. The Board still exists and does good work, though its activity is not so great as in former years.

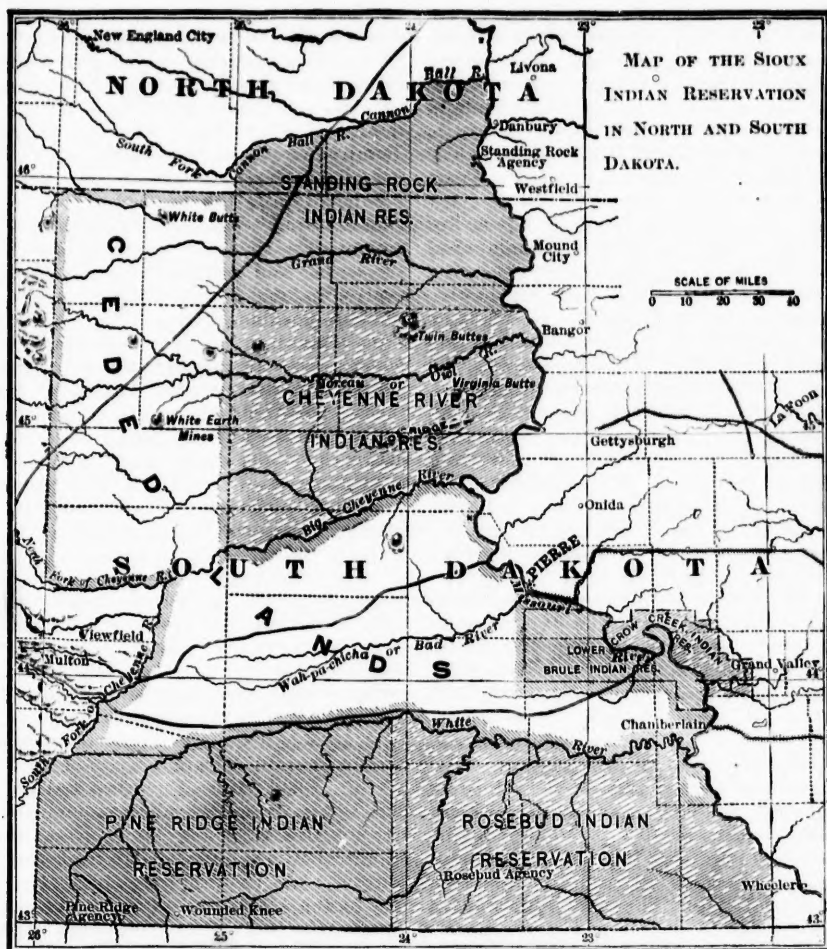
I have treated at some length this introduction to that part of my subject which is of more immediate interest—the recent Indian disturbance—in the belief that by so doing I can make plain how slowly and with how much appar-

ent loss any advance is effected in the performance of a great public work. The sacrifice is great, but it is not made in vain. Great abuses, which at one time seemed impregnable, are, by patient, intelligent effort, finally removed. Twenty-five years ago corruption in Indian affairs was wide-spread; it is now, I believe, quite the exception, not the rule. I would especially emphasize this fact at this time. The restrictions in the service and the keen observation of the public make dishonesty now very difficult and dangerous.

That many things in Indian management are to-day seriously wrong and urgently in need of amendment will be readily granted. The only efficacious remedy for these evils lies in an application of the force of popular sentiment to the centres of power in Washington; but this application must be made with intelligent discrimination.

The Sioux people number about twenty-eight thousand souls. They occupy to-day what is known as the Great Sioux Reservation. This tract until very recently included about twenty-two million acres, lying in the Territory of Dakota. It is shaped somewhat like a boot, its sole resting on the northern Nebraska line; its calf, or western boundary, the Black Hills of western Dakota; the upper or northern boundary, the Cannon-Ball River (so named from the spherical stones found on its banks and bottom); its eastern line, corresponding to the shinbone—to carry out the simile—the swift, tawny Missouri, with its dangerous eddies, its fretted surface, and its ever-crumbling banks of sand.

The Sioux in old times roamed over tracts vastly greater than even their present reservation, until recently, comprised; but under the treaty of 1868 most of them, and after the treaty of 1876 all of them, had been brought within the limits of the reserve. They were a very aggressive, warlike people so far back as we have record of the tribe in the early days of French exploration, when Marquette, the young Jesuit missionary, about 1670, came in contact with them on the west shore of Lake Superior. The Chippewas, the Crows, and the Utes were among their



traditional and hereditary enemies; but it is said to have been their boast that they never shed the blood of a white man. Catlin—the artist, explorer, and their historian—spent some time among them, studying their customs and committing to canvas their fierce, painted faces, their dances, and their hunts.

The Great Reserve is subdivided into six minor reserves, each with its agency, its agent, and Government employees—school-teachers, physicians, blacksmiths, and carpenters. These subdivisions are as follows: Standing Rock Reserve in the northeast on the Missouri; Chey-

enne River to the south, with its agency on the Missouri; Crow Creek Reserve, a little farther down on the other side of the river; then Lower Brule bordering on the Missouri, with its southern boundary the Nebraska line. These last-named agencies are now consolidated under the care of a single agent. Westward lie the two largest, and in some respects most important, reserves—Rosebud and Pine Ridge—the latter being the southwesternmost section and forming the heel of the boot. This is the home of the Sioux people. It is high, breezy, prairie land, almost tree-

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less, except where the infrequent creeks spread a fringe of scant timber—the cotton-wood, scrub-oak, the ash, with undergrowth of wild plum-trees and buffalo-berry bushes. The face of the country suggests a mighty rolling sea—its billows sinking into the level horizon—that by some magic touch had turned to dry land, still retaining in outline the suggestion of former movement, and in the color of grassy hills the memory of its waves.

What can be said with truth as to the character of these people? What does one find that is tangible, actual, in moving among and studying them with a sincere desire to be rid of either partisan or hostile bias? Many things; for truth here, to the superficial eye, is apparently as complex and as discordant as it is elsewhere; but patient study reveals certain great truths which will not betray the investigator.

There are two great and sharply defined parties among the Sioux Indians to-day, either of which is the creation and representative of an idea. These ideas are antagonistic and irreconcilable.

First. There is the old pagan and non-progressive party. Inspired by sentiments of hostility to the Government and to white civilization, it believes in what is Indian, and hates what belongs to the white man. Its delight is in the past, and its dream is that the past shall come back again—the illimitable prairie, with vast herds of the vanished buffalo, the deer, the antelope, all the excitement of the chase, and the still fiercer thrill of bloody struggle with rival savage men. Consider what has been the education of the men who form this party—eating Government rations paid them in lieu of ceded lands, idleness, visits to distant relatives and friends, constant feasts and dances, with oft-repeated recitals from the older men of their own deeds of valor and the achievements of their ancestors. If we put ourselves in their place, the attitude of these non-progressive Indians will be intelligible, and their acts will be partly accounted for. A white man nurtured under such conditions would scarcely be distinguishable from an Indian. As Captain Pratt has well said: "Savagery is a habit, civilization is a habit."

This old Indian party has, undoubtedly, grievances in unfulfilled promises and broken treaties—and it has welcomed them and nurtured them. Its argument with members of its own race who thought otherwise and did otherwise has been: "Make trouble and the Great Father will send you what you want."

The most noted leaders of this party, and the men most typical of its spirit and intentions, were Spotted Tail (who was killed by Crow Dog in 1881 in a personal feud), Red Cloud, and Sitting Bull. Of these three men Spotted Tail was the most remarkable for native force and ability; but all were alike in love of power, a deep sense of personal and race pride, duplicity, unconquerable antagonism to civilization. Visits to the East and to Washington, with the well-meant but injudicious attention of charitable persons and the flattering curiosity of the public served to heighten the vanity and sense of personal importance of these leaders, but only to intensify their hostility to the white man's ways. They felt precisely the same contempt for work which has often been shown by aristocratic classes among civilized nations—with the same sense of personal pride. Once, in an interview between Bishop Hare and Spotted Tail, the latter, replying to the bishop's remarks, said: "You did not inform me that you were coming," and then, as though not wishing to recognize the bishop's presence further, he drew his blanket about him with the air of a patrician, and stepping back and aside, so as to place a wood-pile between his visitor and himself, put an end to the conversation. Sitting Bull is said to have received one hundred and fifty dollars from a photographer for the privilege of taking his picture and to have habitually asked and received ten dollars for a series of perpendicular pen-strokes which served as his autograph. Such is an outline sketch of the character of the men who held together the pagan party and guided the minds of its young men. The elements of danger to be found in such conditions will be readily appreciated.

Second. A new, progressive, and what may properly be termed Christian party,

whose life was begotten, nourished, and trained by missionary enterprise and devotion. Among the great pioneers and founders of this movement were Drs. Riggs and Williamson—the former of the Congregational and the latter of the Presbyterian Church—Father de Smet, the heroic Roman Catholic missionary who ministered to the Sioux among the other tribes west of the Missouri, and Bishop Hare, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, whose work has now assumed extended proportions and has acquired a strong influence all over the Sioux country. The translation of the Bible into the Dakota tongue was the great work of Drs. Williamson and Riggs. The entire Bible was first printed in the Dakota tongue in 1879, though large portions of it were in print long before. It was the foundation of the successful efforts of the Protestant missionaries of all denominations, and has been an essential factor in the development of the progressive party. The work of the Congregational Church among the Sioux has its centre on the Santee Reservation in Nebraska, which is separated from the Great Sioux Reservation by the Missouri. Here a large Indian training-school of the Congregational Church is located, which sends out its graduates and exerts its influence all over the great reserve. The Congregationalists have seventy-five missionaries and teachers among the Sioux; fourteen schools, with four hundred and fifty-two pupils; six churches, with three hundred and thirty-two church members. The Roman Catholics have large and important schools on three of the Sioux reservations. Both this church and the Presbyterian labor actively for the civilization of these Indians.

The Santee Sioux, who number about seven hundred, afford a striking example of the complete change which Indians undergo when favorably situated, and when subjected to the influences of education and religion. They took a prominent part in the Minnesota massacre, but having passed through many vicissitudes and sufferings for their share in the uprising, they are to-day among the most peaceable and industrious Indians to be found in the country. They have become citizens of the

United States, they own their land in severalty, while their unused lands have been opened up to white settlement. It was not, however, until after great pressure had been brought to bear by their friends that the Government could be induced to fulfil its own specific promises to grant them patents for their lands; while the cupidity of their white neighbors was eagerly noting the increasing value of their possessions, and was urgently petitioning Congress to move them to the westward, and to open their farms to white settlement. Such a sad and but too frequent catastrophe in the history of Indian progress was happily averted.

No more abundant results have been obtained in building up the party of Christianity and civilization among the Sioux than have rewarded the long labors of Bishop Hare and the little band of earnest workers who, for a period of more than seventeen years, have labored under his direction, and who now have their boarding-schools and mission chapels scattered over every part of the Sioux reserve. At this date from seven thousand to eight thousand among the people are counted as attendants upon the Episcopal Church. There are one thousand seven hundred communicants, forty native catechists and nine native ministers, forty branches of the Women's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions. Among Indians of this denomination alone during the past year about three thousand dollars have been raised for religious purposes. It is my purpose to draw attention to these facts only on account of their bearing upon the question of a new and progressive party among the Indians, and in order to permit a clear understanding of the precise conditions under which the recent outbreak occurred.

In these Christian Indians is to be found abundant food for a study of the germs and first awakenings of civilized life rich in variety and suggestion. They present all possible differences of age, condition, and of moral and mental attainments. Here is the man from whose face the paint has just been washed, whose clothing is a struggle between civilization and barbarism, whose hair is still plaited, and into

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whose darkened mind have fallen the first faint gleams of desire for the "new way;" here is a native teacher, perhaps fairly taught in a reservation boarding-school, but only able to speak English imperfectly, struggling single-handed in a heathen camp to win converts to Christian morality and civilized life; while here, as the ripest fruit of Indian civilization, is the native minister, or physician, the graduate of an Eastern college, whose wife perhaps is a white woman, whose habits of thought and whose manners are those of a gentleman, and who stands on equal terms with the rest of the world.

And yet in all this diversity to be found in the progressive party among the Sioux is clearly shown one controlling principle—an awakened moral purpose, new-born, or well-developed, the stirring of an enlightened conscience, and of a long-dormant intellect.

I do not think that any intelligent or fairly well-disposed person could travel with observation among these Christian Indians, as the writer has frequently done, without being strongly impressed with the many direct and indirect evidences of the essential difference which has come to exist between them and their wild brethren in thought, purpose, and occupation. How serious the existing division might become under stress of an accumulation of misfortunes, whether of an avoidable or unavoidable character, can readily be imagined.

Such a crisis was destined soon to occur which excited the heathen party to paroxysms of resentful fury, and tested the fidelity and fortitude of their opponents to the uttermost. For many years the whites of Dakota have sought to cut a great highway for civilization through the heart of the Sioux reserve, so that easy communication might be established between eastern and western Dakota, and Indian lands, practically unused, might be opened to white settlement. It was to the highest interests of both whites and Indians that this should be done—if done wisely and fairly. Unfortunately, the terms of the agreement presented for the acceptance of the Indians by a Commission sent out from Washington to treat with

them in 1882 were inequitable; the compensation promised for the lands was absurdly small, being about eight cents per acre, and the means used to procure the assent of the Indians to the agreement were in some notable instances not honorable. The past is full of such instances. Fortunately, the friends of the Indians revealed the objectionable character of the agreement, and of the means that had been taken to procure the Indians' assent to it in time to prevent its passage in Congress, although the measure narrowly escaped ratification. But the opponents of the bill saw clearly that sooner or later the opening of the reserve must be devoted to making the change contribute to the Indians' advancement. The reservation could not be permitted permanently to block progress, and the Indian could not be allowed to rest in an isolation which kept him from contact with civilization, and nurtured savagery. In 1887 another agreement was prepared and presented to the Indians by another Commission. Its terms were a great improvement upon those of its predecessor, and were, on the whole, very favorable to the Indians; but they, having learned how they had been deceived in its previous attempt, refused to accept the agreement. Finally its terms were modified so as to make them still more favorable to the Indians, and, under the efforts of another Commission, of which General Crook was the distinguished chairman, the Indians were induced to sign. About eleven million acres of land were given up under the operation of this act, and the reservation, which had originally been about four times as large as the State of Massachusetts, was reduced one-half. These Indians, who, like other tribes, have always been extremely sensitive to a reduction of their reservation, were only induced to sign this agreement under severe pressure. Both parties among the Sioux were indisposed to cede more of their land, but the non-progressives were bitter and active in their opposition. Bishop Hare treating this matter, says:

"Some preferred their old life the more earnestly because schools and churches were sapping and undermining it. Some wished delay. All com-

plained that many of the engagements solemnly made with them in former years . . . had been broken—and here they were right. They suspected that present promises of pay for their lands would prove only old ones in a new shape. When milch cows were promised—cows having been promised in previous agreements—the Indians exclaimed, 'There's that same old cow!' and demanded that no further surrender be expected until former promises had been fulfilled. They were assured that a new era had dawned, and that all past promises would be kept. So we all thought."

The Indians were finally induced by the most urgent pressure on the part of the Commissioner to sign the agreement. Their expectations of the rewards which were to follow, and which had been glowingly depicted by the Commissioners ran high. Then followed a series of delays and misfortunes, some of which might have been prevented, while others were from purely natural causes. To present them clearly and briefly to the reader I cannot do better than to quote the graphic language of Bishop Hare:

The Indians understand little of the complex forms and delays of our Government. Six months passed and nothing came. Three months more, and nothing came.* But in the midst of the winter's pinching cold the Indians learned that the transaction had been declared complete and half of their land proclaimed as thrown open to the whites. Surveys were not promptly made; perhaps they could not be, and no one knew what land was theirs and what was not. The very earth seemed sliding from beneath their feet. Other misfortunes seemed to be crowding on them. On some reserves their rations were being reduced, and lasted, even when carefully husbanded, but one-half the period for which they were issued.† In the summer of 1889 all the people on the Pine Ridge Reserve—men, women and children—were called in from their farms to the agency to treat with the Commissioners and were kept there a whole month, and, on returning to their homes, found that their cattle had broken into their fields and trampled down or eaten up all their crops. This was true in a degree elsewhere. In 1890 the crops, which promised splendidly early in July, failed

* A bill was drawn up in the Senate under General Crook's eye, and passed, providing for the fulfilment of the promises of the Commission, but it was pigeon-holed in the House.

† The amount of beef bought for the Indian is not a fair criterion of the amount he receives. A steer will lose two hundred pounds or more of its flesh during the course of the winter.

entirely later, because of a severe drought. The people were often hungry, and the physicians in many cases said died, when taken sick, not so much from disease as for want of food.‡

No doubt the people could have saved themselves from suffering if industry, economy, and thrift had abounded; but these are just the virtues which a people merging from barbarism lack. The measles prevailed in 1889 and were exceedingly fatal. Next year the gripe swept over the people with appalling results. Whooping-cough followed among the children. Sullenness and gloom began to gather, especially among the heathen and wilder Indians. A witness of high character told me that a marked discontent, amounting almost to despair, prevailed in many quarters. The people said their children were all dying from diseases brought by the whites, their race was perishing from the face of the earth, and they might as well be killed at once. Old chiefs and medicine-men were losing their power. Withal new ways were prevailing more and more, which did not suit the older people. The old ways which they loved were passing away. In a word, all things were against them, and to add to the calamity, many Indians, especially the wilder element, had nothing to do but to brood over their misfortunes. While in this unhappy state the story of a Messiah coming, with its Ghost Dance and strange hallucinations, spread among the heathen part of the people. The Christian Indians, on the whole, maintained their stand with praiseworthy patience and fortitude; but the dancers were in a state of exaltation approaching frenzy. Restraint only increased their madness. The dancers were found to be well armed. Insubordination broke out on several reserves. The authority of the agent and of the native police was overthrown. The civilized Indians were intimidated. Alarm spread everywhere.

From what has been already presented the precise nature of some of the conditions which brought about the disturbance among the Sioux will be apparent. I have endeavored to point out the sharp differences and antagonisms which existed between the Christian and the pagan party, differences which became more and more sharply accentuated as the party of progress advanced and prospered. The party of conservatism was driven more and more within itself, as it saw the progress of civilization without the reservation and within it. Then came the strange delusion of an Indian Messiah, with its promise of redemption to the Indian race and the

‡ This is doubtless true of all the poor, the poor in our cities, and the poor settlers in the West. The testimony regarding the existence of hunger is exceedingly conflicting, but at Pine Ridge Agency at least it seemed to me conclusive that it was general and extreme.

destruction of the white invader. It came, so I learn through the last report of the Rev. William J. Cleveland, the experienced missionary, who is now making a journey of investigation into the causes of the uprising for the Indian Rights Association, and who gives the Indian story as they tell it, "from the people who wear rabbit-skin blankets (whoever they are), far west of the Yellow Skins, who are far west of the Utes." Mr. Cleveland does not know who the Indians referred to are, but the writer surmises that they are the Pueblo, or village, Indians of New Mexico and Arizona. They use rabbit-skin blankets, live far west of the Utes, and, moreover, hold the old Aztec tradition of Montezuma, their Saviour, returning to free their race. It is one of their customs to look from their house-tops at dawn for the coming of Montezuma over the eastern mountains. It is not impossible that this ancient tradition, which was heretofore confined to the southwest and to certain tribes of Indians, became, under peculiar conditions and circumstances, migratory and operative everywhere. Whether that is, or is not, the true solution of the origin of this religious fanaticism among the Indians, there can be no doubt of its powerful effect upon the Sioux. It was eagerly taken hold of by the leaders, of whom Sitting Bull was the foremost, and was made the vehicle of warlike designs, notwithstanding the fact that the new doctrine was altogether pacific, so far as the actions which it permitted to the Indians themselves were concerned. The revelation from the Messiah was that he had once come down to save the white race, but that they had rejected him and finally killed him. He now rejected them, and would come, when the grass was about two inches high in the spring, to save his red children and to destroy the white race and their works. It was enjoined upon all who believed in him to wear a peculiar kind of dress, and to practise the Ghost Dance as often and as long at a time as they possibly could, as an evidence of their faith. If any died of exhaustion in the dance or swooned away, they were to believe that such went immediately to him, where they had communion with the departed, and whence

they could return to tell the living of what they had heard and seen. At the coming of the Messiah, for which his followers were to wait patiently until the spring, a new earth would be formed covering the present world, and burying all the whites and those Indians who had not joined in the dance. The Messiah would again bring with him the departed of their own people, and the earth would be again as their forefathers knew it, only there should be no more death.

Such is the doctrine of the Indian Messiah fresh from Indian lips. It can readily be imagined with what power such a doctrine came upon the darkened minds of savage men, some of whom were suffering, in addition to the irritating remembrance of unfulfilled promises, the pangs of hunger.

It is the positive assertion of Mr. Cleveland, after a detailed and careful investigation at Standing Rock, that there was no suffering from lack of food at that point. He says in answer to the question: "How far due to hunger?" "Not at all, no one of them complained, or does now, at this agency, of short rations. The number of those at Standing Rock who took part in the insurrection was very small, not more than ten per cent. of the whole. Three hundred and seventy-five in all left the agency when the stampede incident to the death of Sitting Bull occurred, though many have since returned. The entire Indian population on the Standing Rock Reserve, according to the last census, is four thousand and ninety. It is important to note the maintenance of Government authority at Standing Rock, through the influence of an experienced and able agent, and its complete collapse at Pine Ridge through the incapacity of an inexperienced one.

Sitting Bull himself, however, was one of the leading, if not the leading, agitator and fomentor of trouble. His runners were everywhere active among those Indians on the other parts of the reservation to whom they could appeal with most chance of success—Big Foot's people among the pagan element on the Cheyenne River Reserve, the Lower Brules lower down the Missouri, the Upper Brules, or Spotted Tail's people,

at Rosebud, Red Cloud's people among the Ogallalas at Pine Ridge. They had fruitful soil in which to sow their evil seed—ignorance made dangerous by fanaticism among many of the wildest Indians, and at Pine Ridge hunger and discontent and unfulfilled treaties, both long past and recent.

What powers of resistance and control had the Government at its disposal with which to meet the coming storm? Upon what principle of selection does the Government base its choice of agents and employees sent to represent its policy and to manage its affairs on Indian reservations? This question touches the vital point of the whole Indian question.

On the experience, courage, fidelity, tact, keen sense of justice and sympathy of an Indian agent at a large agency, where wild and dangerous, as well as peaceable and easily controlled Indians are located, depend the success or failure of the Government's efforts for the civilization of its wards. Upon the agent's possession of such qualities may also depend the safety of human life, the protection of property, and the saving of vast sums of money.

With such serious considerations in view in the management of such an immense business concern as the Indian service, in which not only the welfare of two hundred and fifty thousand human beings is directly concerned, but of multitudes of white settlers besides, is it beyond reason to ask that the principles of sound business administration should be adopted?

What are the plain, indubitable facts regarding the Indian service? The Spoils System of appointment has been the prevailing system since the writer first began acquaintanceship with Indian affairs in 1882. What does that mean? Simply that the President, the Secretary of the Interior, or the Indian Commissioner, one or all, are under compulsion, or at the least powerful pressure, to appoint persons to positions in the Indian service, not as they would like to do, because they have the best and most reasonable assurance that they are fitted by character and experience to perform well the duties of their several stations, but because these

appointees are thrust on them by the importunity of Senators, Representatives, or other powerful politicians. These gentlemen frequently demand such positions of the Executive as their manifest perquisites, as their lawful prey and spoil. It is thus that their political debts are paid. I have known the Governor of a great State laughingly admit that for political hacks who were unfit for anything else he found places in the Indian service. I could furnish, were it desirable or necessary, a long list of needy, inefficient, worthless persons, some not actually bad, but wholly unsuited to their positions; others with shady or blackened records, men who had failed in everything else, or drunkards and debauchees, who had found their way into the Indian service. Many things, half sad, half ludicrous, and some really dreadful things I have known regarding the public service of these people. And then again I have known men of high character, high talent, lofty aspiration, and generous sympathies serving as Indian agents, with patience and self-sacrifice, ill-paid but abundantly rewarded with abuse, building up industry and civilization among their Indians only to see their plans and hopes sadly marred or sinking into decay with the passing of the administration or the party that gave them office. The ghastly levity and unreason, the insane wickedness of the whole false system has been handed down as a miserable legacy from one administration to another.

Good men and women, in the service and out of it, have been tempted to say, "Is there enough gained to make effort worth while since the people love to have it so?" Nevertheless the cloud has had a silver lining, for the evils have stirred a great popular sentiment, and things are better than they were.

In 1882 Dr. V. T. McGillycuddy held the post of Indian Agent at Pine Ridge. He had previously served with distinction in various departments of the Government; from 1866 to 1868 as resident physician, Marine Hospital Service; in the War Department as topographer on the international survey of the 49th parallel in 1874; in the Interior Department as chief topographer of the

survey of the Black Hills in 1875; in the War Department as attending Surgeon of Second and Third United States Cavalry in the Big Horn expedition of 1876, and Assistant Post-Surgeon in the Department of the Platte and Dakota in 1877-78, and as Indian agent in charge of the Pine Ridge Agency from March, 1879. His incumbency at Pine Ridge was one evincing the highest courage, skill, and administrative ability. A force of fifty Indian police was organized by him, and admirably trained in cavalry and infantry tactics, under the command of his chief clerk, who had been a soldier during the war. With this force the agent was able to thwart or to subdue the frequent attempts of Red Cloud to create disorder. In 1884 a serious outbreak was threatened by this chief, who was used as a tool by certain men with whose selfish and dishonest schemes the agent had interfered. Senator Dawes, the champion of Indian interests in the Senate, writing of this affair in 1884, said:

For days the life of every white man there was in peril, and nothing but the courage and prudence of McGillycuddy saved them from a horrible massacre. Red Cloud, overpowered by the law, preferred charges against McGillycuddy. They were investigated by a special agent sent from Washington, who reported against McGillycuddy. He then asked a hearing before the Secretary, who sent another inspector for re-examination. This inspector reported in favor of McGillycuddy, not only exonerating him from the charges of Red Cloud and the report of . . . , but reflecting severely upon [the former inspector] himself. Red Cloud enlisted Bland in his favor, who induced the Secretary to send out a third inspector to investigate the conduct of McGillycuddy. This report not only declared the charges false, but highly commended him for the work he was doing at that agency.

Senator Dawes further says: "The Senate Committee, of which I was a member, was at this agency last summer and took much pains to ascertain the truth of this matter. They were unanimously of the opinion that at no agency which they had visited, or had any knowledge of, had so much been done for the advancement of wild Indians as at this place." The writer can, from frequent personal observation, fully confirm the truth of Mr. Dawes's statement. Pine Ridge at that time, and so

long as McGillycuddy was in charge of it, although one of the most difficult agencies in the service, was a model of efficiency and order.

Upon the advent of the Democratic administration there began, to the surprise of many, and to the regret of all of the friends of the Indians, a general proscription of those Indian agents and employees who had served under the previous administration. In vain were earnest protests presented. The incumbents at every agency on the Sioux reservation were changed, with the single exception of Standing Rock, where the agent, Major McLaughlin, one of the best men in the service, was probably saved by his own good record and the political influence of the Roman Catholic Church, of which he is a devout member. In two instances these changes were manifestly for the better; in most of the others they were seriously for the worse. The latter was manifestly the case at Pine Ridge and Rosebud. Under McGillycuddy's successor there was a steady deterioration in the morale of the agency and in the efficiency of the police force. At Rosebud the former agent, Mr. James G. Wright, to whom the public owes a debt of gratitude for years of wise, patient, and successful service, was succeeded by an agent whose career in the Indian service was one of ignominious failure.

Out of fifty-eight Indian agents in the entire service, upward of fifty were changed. The removals in the other grades of the service were general. In some instances, as has been frankly and gladly admitted, these changes were for the better; but the general result was deterioration, not improvement. Where changes were fortunate and happy in their results the friends of the Indians were prompt to admit the fact, and stood ready upon the incoming of the Republican administration to pray for the retention of every officer known to them to be deserving. Indeed, the first request made by them to Mr. Noble, the Republican Secretary of the Interior, was that agents and employees might not be removed for political reasons, but that they might be retained or dismissed solely on the ground of merit, so that the fatal rock of spoils

policy, on which the Indian management of the previous administration had foundered, might be avoided. The request was as courteously listened to as it was subsequently completely ignored. The administration adopted what was styled the "Home Rule" system of appointment, an elegant synonym for the opprobrious term "spoils system." Home rule meant, so far as the Indians were concerned, the rule of aliens and enemies, for it transferred the appointment of agents, and in many cases of subordinates, from the hands of the central and responsible authorities in Washington to the tender mercies of politicians in every territory in which Indian reservations were located. The Indian Rights Association uttered a prompt but ineffectual protest against this principle of appointment as being "unsound in theory and likely to be disastrous in practice."

No blame can be attached to General Morgan, the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs, or to Dr. Dorchester, the present Superintendent of Indian Schools, for whatever evil consequences have flowed from the adoption of this phase of the spoils system. Both of these gentlemen have been earnest advocates of the merit system, and have, within the limits of their power, observed it, and beyond those limits have labored for its adoption in all grades of the Indian service. The present Indian Commissioner has, in the opinion of the writer, rendered an inestimable service both to the Indians and the public by wise, faithful, and energetic service.

Under the "Home Rule" system the inefficient Democratic successor to Dr. McGillicuddy was removed during the past summer to make room, not for a wisely selected man chosen with a view to the skilful control of the usually troublesome and now dangerous and excited elements at Pine Ridge, but for one destitute of any of those qualities by which he could justly lay claim to the position—experience, force of character, courage, and sound judgment. His moral weight and force was insufficient to suppress the threatened irruption. At all the Sioux agencies, with the exception of Standing Rock, where McLaughlin, equipped by long years of

experience, faced the storm with firmness and success, the agents had been changed by the Republican administration, as their predecessors had been by the Democratic one. But at Pine Ridge, the most important of all, the results were most disastrous. As has been made clear, it was the weakest point in the Sioux country, and here had been provided the weakest control, as though, in a spirit of malicious fun, the Government had set a timid and untrained rider astride a wicked, fractious horse, just to see what would happen!

At the time the agent took charge of Pine Ridge, October 1, 1890, the Ghost Dance was at its height. There was general discontent throughout the Sioux nation, the troubled condition added to and fomented by Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and other agitators. But I do not hesitate to say that had a man of nerve and experience, who knew these Indians, and was known by them, backed by a disciplined force of Indian police, been in charge, an abandonment of this agency and the calling of the military would no more have been necessary than were such measures necessary at Standing Rock. It is well known that the presence of troops at an agency is always extremely irritating to Indians. It proved so in this instance.

The next scene in the drama is vigorously depicted by Dr. McGillicuddy, who had been present for some days at the agency as the representative of Governor Mellette. Under date of December 4th, he writes:

The condition of affairs when I left there last week was as follows: About four thousand of the agency Indians were camped at the agency. The outlying villages, churches, and schools were abandoned. About two thousand Brules and Wazakas were camped twenty-five miles distant on Wounded Knee Creek, uncertain whether to come into the agency or not, on account of the presence of troops. Emissaries of Sitting Bull were circulating among all of the Indians, inciting them to revolt, and ranging through the abandoned villages destroying property of friendly Indians. Indians by the dozen were beseeching me to obtain permission for them to go to their homes and protect their property, their horses, cows, pigs, chickens, etc., the accumulation of years. Runners came to me from the Brule camp, asking me to come out and explain what the coming of troops meant. They said they knew me, would believe in me, and come in. Red Cloud and

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other chiefs made the same request of Agent Royer and Special Agent Cooper. The request was refused; no white man was sent to them. On Sunday last Sitting Bull's emissaries prevailed; the Brules became hostile, stole horses and cattle, and are now on the edge of the Bad Lands, ready for a winter's campaign. Many Indians who were friendly when I left the agency will join them. They have possession of the agency beef herd of thirty-five hundred head of cattle. The presence of troops at the agency is being rapidly justified. What I state, investigation can substantiate.

There are two prominent events subsequent to the arrival of troops at Pine Ridge which have especially excited inquiry in the public mind and to which I will refer. The first is the arrest and death of Sitting Bull; the second is the affair of Wounded Knee. The limits of this article will only permit an outline of these incidents.

The arrest of Sitting Bull was, no doubt, a measure necessary to prevent further spreading of a revolt which largely emanated from him. Concerning his own dangerous intentions there can be no doubt. The evidence on this point is abundant and specific. The arrest was attempted under telegraphic instructions from General Ruger, at St. Paul, to Colonel Drum, commanding Fort Yates, the military post adjoining the Standing Rock Agency, under date of December 12th. It was the expressed wish of General Ruger that the military and the civil agent should co-operate in effecting the arrest. Fortunately entire harmony existed between Colonel Drum and Major McLaughlin. The agent wished to effect the arrest by means of the Indian police, so as to avoid unnecessary irritation to the followers of Sitting Bull, and at a time when the majority of these Indians would be absent from their camp drawing rations at the agency. This wise intention was frustrated by the unexpected attempt of Sitting Bull to leave the reservation. Therefore the arrest, instead of being attempted December 20th, was precipitated December 14th. Sitting Bull evidently intended to submit to his captors peaceably, but, while dressing, in his tent for the journey, he was incited to resistance by the outcries of his son, who berated the Indian policemen and exhorted his father not to allow himself to be taken.

Upon coming out of his tent, under charge of the police, Sitting Bull yielded to his son's advice and called on his people to rescue him. In an instant a savage crowd of one hundred and fifty Indians attacked and fired upon the police. Almost immediately six of the police were killed or mortally wounded, and Sitting Bull was himself killed by one of the wounded police. The fight lasted about half an hour. The police soon drove the Indians, who far outnumbered them, from around the adjoining buildings and into the surrounding woods. During the fight women attacked the police with knives and clubs, but in every instance the latter simply disarmed and placed them under guard until the troops arrived, after which they were given their liberty. The highest praise for courage and ability was accorded the police for their part in this affair by the military officer commanding the troops who supported them.

Can American patriotism see nothing in the devotion of these men to duty, their loyalty to the flag, their constancy even unto death, which is worthy an enduring monument? Can American art find no inspiration, no elements of true dramatic emotion, in this pre-eminently American tragedy?

It were well if the same chisel which recorded in "eternal bronze" the sad and patient nobility of Lincoln might also fashion some memorial to the humble heroes of Standing Rock! The genius of Thorwaldsen and the fidelity of the Swiss Guard breathe forever in the dying Lion of Lucerne. May not the genius of some American sculptor and the fidelity of the Indian police find similar expression?

What is to be said of Wounded Knee, with its two hundred dead, its slaughtered women and children? Evidence from various reliable sources shows very clearly that Colonel Forsythe, the veteran officer in charge, did all that could be done by care, consideration, and firmness to prevent a conflict. He had provided a tent warmed with a Sibley stove for Big Foot, who was ill with pneumonia. He assured the Indians of kind treatment, but told them also that they must surrender their arms. He tried to

avoid a search for weapons, but to this they forced him to resort. The explosion came during the process of search, and when a medicine-man incited them to resist and appealed to their fanaticism by assuring them that their sacred shirts were bullet-proof. Then one shot was fired by the Indians, and another and another. The Indians were wholly responsible in bringing on the fight. Whether in the desperate struggle which ensued there was or was not an unnecessary sacrifice of the lives of women and children is another question. From the fact that so many women and children were killed, and that their bodies were found far from the scene of action, and as though they were shot down while fleeing, it would look as though blind rage had been at work, in striking contrast to the moderation of the Indian police at the Sitting Bull fight when they were assailed by women.

But responsibility for the massacre of Wounded Knee, as for many another sad and similar event, rests more upon the shoulders of the citizens of the United States who permit the condition of savage ignorance, incompetent control, or Congressional indifference and inaction, than upon those of maddened soldiers, who having seen their comrades shot at their side are tempted to kill and destroy all belonging to the enemy within their reach. That the uprising ended with so little bloodshed the country may thank the patience and ability of General Miles. Perhaps had he taken the field earlier there might have been still less to mourn.

What is the remedy? What must be done to prevent such occurrences in future? The remedy is not far to seek nor does it require many words to state its essentials.

First, the people as a body must desire and demand of the President and of Congress better things. There must be a substantial unity of opinion among various bodies of citizens as to the main points of a remedy, and unity of action in securing it; a willingness to abandon minor points in order to secure the greater ones. The necessity for abandoning partisanship in considering this great national question should be

frankly recognized. The words Democrat and Republican should be forgotten in dealing with Indian affairs. Even now there are sincere friends of the Indians who are very sensitive to any criticism, no matter how just it may be, which reflects on their own party. This is a fatal block to progress. The great religious bodies, the Roman communion on the one side, and the Protestant communions on the other, should try to recognize the value of each other's work, at least as an instrument of civilization. There should be greater co-operation between the civil and military branches of the Government, less drawing into hostile camps with the idea that there is a military severity and inhumanity on the one side, and unmitigated rascality on the other. There are military officers who would make capital Indian agents, and civil agents could be found, if the right way were taken to seek them, who can manage Indians without the intrusion of troops.

If, then, a public sentiment can be aroused on this question at once powerful, intelligent, united, and persistent, these are the simple principles and the flexible system which it should demand:

1. A single, intelligent, experienced, responsible head to control the Indian service under the President—a man who shall be permitted to form his plans and to carry them to fruition along the lines of well-defined and sound principles, and free from partisan interference.

2. An Indian service conducted in absolute harmony with the principles of Civil Service Reform—the principle of merit, not of spoils. Only thoroughly qualified men, should be appointed to serve as Indian agents.

3. The prompt appropriation of funds by Congress to permit the education of all Indian youth, and the effective management of the service. No more Indian boys and girls should be permitted to grow up in ignorance and savagery; also the prompt passage of laws recommended by the Indian Department and requisite to protect the interests of the Indians.

But to do these things, as Bishop Hare has well said, and to solve "the problem that remains, the spoils system, will require 'the uprising of a great people.'"